

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 01026 270731Z

14

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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R 261621Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3022

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 1026

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI, AO

SUBJECT: DEYOUNG ARTICLE JANUARY 23

REF: USINFO 231736Z JAN 76

1. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, DEYOUNG ARTICLE JANUARY 23 READS TOO MUCH INTO MUHAMMED'S MODERATE STATEMENT UPON RETURN TO LAGOS FOLLOWING ADJOURNMENT OF RECENT OAU SUMMIT ON ANGOLA. SUPREME ARMED FORCES COMMANDER OBASANJO'S SPEECH JANUARY 17 IN IBADAN (LAGOS 779) IS AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT AS MUHAMMED'S STATEMENT IN INDICATING THE BASIC ORIENTATION OF THE FMG ON THE ANGOLAN MATTER AND ON US POLICY TOWARD THE ANGOLAN QUESTION.

2. MORE IMPORTANT FLAW IN ARTICLE IS SIMPLISTIC TREATMENT OF CURRENT NIGERIAN ATTITUDES ON ANGOLA. ARTICLE IMPLIES THAT FMG WAS LOOKING FOR A CHANCE TO EXPLOIT LATANT ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENTS IN NIGERIA AND SEIZED UPON SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA FOR THIS PURPOSE. FMG'S ANTI-AMERICAN LINE HAS STIRRED INTERNAL DISSENT, ACCORDING TO DEYOUNG,
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PAGE 02 LAGOS 01026 270731Z

DIVIDING THE COUNTRY BETWEEN THOSE WHO ARE IDEOLOGICALLY CRITICAL

OF THE US AND THOSE WHO HAVE STRONG ECONOMIC LINKS WITH AMERICA.

3. THE FACTS ARE THAT, WHEN IT BECAME PUBLIC, SOUTH AFRICAN'S ENTRY INTO ANGOLAN CRISIS PROVOKED BROAD AND GENERAL REACTION THROUGHOUT NIGERIAN SOCIETY, INCLUDING MANY NIGERIANS WHO CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IN MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL ECONOMIC AND OTHER LINKS WITH THE US.

4. IT WOULD NOT SERVE US INTEREST TO PUBLICIZE "INTERNAL DISSENSION" WITHIN THE FMG ON THE ANGOLAN ISSUE. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, FMG POLICY HAS BEEN FIRM FOR THE PAST SIX WEEKS, WHATEVER COMMISSIONER GARBA'S INTEREST IN CONCILIATION PRIOR TO EVIDENCE OF SIGNIFICANT SOUTH AFRICAN PENETRATION. IN BRIEFINGS TO JOURNALISTS, WE SUGGEST DEPARTMENT SOFT-PEDDLE THIS ASPECT OF THE STORY, PARTICULARLY SINCE MEA IS WELL AWARE THAT IT REVEALED ITS HAND TO US IN THE DAYS JUST PRIOR TO FMG ANNOUNCEMENT OF RECOGNITION OF MPLA.

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